



HQ AETC News Clips

Randolph AFB TX



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NEW: E-mail image of Randolph's Taj Mahal produces unreal response

By Scott Huddleston

Express-News Staff Writer

Web Posted : 03/05/2003 5:18 PM

A photo image that has been widely circulated by e-mail of a 31-plane "USA" formation of jets flying over Randolph AFB's famous Taj Mahal is a fake, according to base officials.

The image, which has been sent around the country as an e-mail attachment, often with a patriotic message, appears to be a simulated version of an authentic 1934 still image of biplanes flying over the Taj Mahal. Randolph officials believe "someone" with the 435th Flying Training Squadron, which moved from Randolph to Moody AFB in Valdosta, Ga., about two years ago, made the image at home on a personal computer.

"I have a specific idea as to who might have done this, but I have no proof," said Ralph Monson, a spokesman for Randolph's 12th Flying Training Wing.

Public affairs officials at Moody AFB and with the 435th had no response today.



This fake image, which has been sent around the country as an e-mail attachment, often with a patriotic message, appears to be a simulated version of an authentic 1934 still image of biplanes flying over the Taj Mahal at Randolph AFB.
Courtesy photo

No formal reprimand likely awaits the originator of the photo image, since it appears no Air Force resources were used in its production. But the person might get a tongue-lashing from Monson, since Randolph officials have received daily calls and e-mails about it from across the country for about a year.

"I wish the person had used a notation saying it was a computerized image," he said. "And maybe they did, originally. But it was passed all around via e-mail, and some think it's real."

Even Air Force personnel have asked about the image. It would likely take approval from two four-star generals, not to mention clearance from the Federal Aviation Administration, to fly such a formation at a low altitude today, Monson said.

"I can't conceive of anyone even asking for that," he said. "I'm not sure what level you'd have to go for approval to do that. It would likely require the president's authorization."

There even have been rumors that NASA officials were in a snit, thinking Randolph had staged the flyover without inviting leaders of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, he said.

A blown-up version of the original 1934 image, shot at Randolph as part of the film "West Point of the Air," appears on a wall mural at the officer's club on the base, Monson said. He did not know whether the image is from a still photograph or a frame from the film.

S. A. Express-News

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E-mail image of Randolph's Taj Mahal produces unreal response, Con't.

Someone apparently used a computer to replace the 36 biplanes in the 1934 image with T-38s, used for modern jet-fighter training, in the new version that caused the "e-mail stir," said Tech Sgt. Kimberly Spencer, a noncommissioned officer in charge of community relations with the training wing.

"There have been so many rumors flying around," she said.

While the photo hasn't been the subject of complaints about misuse of tax dollars, it has been a source of curiosity.

"A lot of people have been asking if it's real," Spencer said.



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Randolph AFB TX



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Photo of 'Taj Mahal' flyover may be patriotic, but it's not real

By Scott Huddleston

San Antonio Express-News

Web Posted : 03/06/2003 12:00 AM

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The image, which has been sent around the country as an e-mail attachment, often with a patriotic message, appears to be a simulated version of an authentic 1934 still image of biplanes flying over the Taj Mahal, the base administration building.

Randolph officials believe someone with the 435th Flying Training Squadron, which moved from Randolph to Moody AFB in Valdosta, Ga., about two years ago, made the image at home on a personal computer.

"I have a specific idea as to who might have done this, but I have no proof," said Ralph Monson, spokesman for Randolph's 12th Flying Training Wing.

Public affairs officials at Moody AFB and with the 435th had no response Wednesday.

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"I can't conceive of anyone even asking for that," he said. "I'm not sure what level you'd have to go for approval to do that. It would likely require the president's authorization."

A blown-up version of the original 1934 image, shot using 36 biplanes at Randolph as part of the film



This image of 31 jets over Randolph AFB's 'Taj Mahal' is an electronically manipulated photo.

Courtesy photos



This 1934 photo of an actual flyover with biplanes was made in support of the film 'West Point of the Air.'

S. A. Express-News

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Randolph AFB TX



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AETC Bases News Clips

Sheppard AFB, TX



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Two more dorms to go up at Sheppard

Buildings, costing \$35 million, will house students, military personnel on base

Angel Riggs

Times Record News

An Oklahoma City-based engineering firm will design and build two Sheppard Air Force Base dormitories in a \$35 million project scheduled to begin later this summer.

The dormitories will house military personnel and students and is part of a program to update infrastructure at the base.

Eventually the dorms will replace aging older buildings.

But the short-term plan is to use the new buildings in conjunction with existing structures to house the increased numbers of students, said Lt. Col. Greg Emanuel, 82nd civil engineer squadron commander.

"This represents the next evolution in quality of living for Air Force personnel — for both students and our permanent personnel," he said.

He said the construction is part of an "aggressive program to replace aging dorms with new ones."

Atkins Americas plans to build two, separate four-story structures, one for students and one for military personnel assigned to the base.

One of the buildings will include apartment-style rooms for 144 single airmen assigned to the base.

At about 55,000 square feet, it will cost roughly \$10 million, and construction is expected to begin in August.

"They will have stove-top cooking and a sink close to the room," Emanuel said.

In addition to a kitchenette, four residents will share a washing machine and dryer rather than having one laundry facility on the first floor of the building, he said.

The new building also includes plans for administrative offices, a recreational area and a picnic pavilion.

The second building, a 162,000-square-foot, 300-room student dormitory, will cost about \$25 million.

"The student dorm is for students here for various lengths of technical courses," he said.

It will house about 600 students, two per room, and will offer more amenities than the existing dorms.

The new student dormitory will offer "a little more privacy, particularly in the semi-private baths," Emanuel said.

Construction of the second building is scheduled to begin in January 2004.

"We hope to build 12 pipeline dorms," Emanuel said of the long-term plan.

However, that number could vary depending on funding and numbers of students. "Pipeline" dorms are for technical training students at the base.

Times Record News

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AETC Bases News Clips Vance AFB OK



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Commissioners elected; charter changes OK'd

By Robert Barron
Staff Writer

The last year a mayor's race was held in Enid was 1997, when 7,123 votes were cast. On Tuesday, 6,640 voters cast ballots, electing a mayor and three new city commissioners and approving a group of proposed city charter changes.

Terry Erwin was elected commissioner in Ward 1, defeating Mike Whitley. Erwin polled 970 votes to 292 for Whitley.

Erwin said he is looking forward to starting his term.

"No. 1, I will pick up my signs and take a breather. Then, I will go get acquainted with the operations of the city. I assume (City Manager) Mr. (Bill) Gamble has an orientation program for city operations. Then, I will start getting into the future plans for arterial streets and residential streets and things that will affect Vance," he said.

See COMMISSION, Page A5

In Ward 2, Don Rose defeated David J. Stanley and John Garrison.

Rose garnered 740 votes, to 265 for Stanley. Garrison, who announced his withdrawal from the race too late for his name to be taken off the ballot, polled 130 votes.

"The main thing is to say thanks to all the people who supported me. From friends that braved the cold and stood on the corners today, to all the other supporters who helped me win today. It's great," Rose said.

John Hodgden polled 845 votes to win a three-way race in Ward 5 without a runoff.

Casey Garrard gained 234 votes and Shirley Marquardt, 202.

"I want to thank all the people who helped me, knocked on doors and helped put up flyers and make phone calls. I also want to thank Casey Garrard and Shirley Marquardt. It was a tough race, and a lot of folks put up a lot of effort. I'm looking forward to my term in office," Hodgden said.

In the mayoral race, Irv Honigsberg defeated Bryce Kennedy 4,812 to 1,828.

Commissioners and the mayor take office the first regular meeting in May.

All of the charter changes were approved by large margins. They were the first in decades to be approved by the voters.

- Question 50 changes the term of mayor to four years from two years and increases the term limit for mayor or commissioners from four years to eight years. It passed 4,138-2,413.

- Question 51 modifies the recall provisions so they are consistent with ward voting. It passed 4,707-1,741.

- Question 52 lowers the age a person can become an Enid firefighter from 21 to 18. It passed 4,175-2,391.

- Question 53 increases the number of members of the Fire Civil Service Commission from three to five. It passed 4,617-1,892.

- Question 54 removes the list of ranks of police officers from the city charter. It passed 4,165-2,268.

- Question 55 requires police patrol officers to serve four years and sergeants two years before they are eligible for promotion with the

Enid department. It passed 5,008-1,465.

- Question 56 adds a provision that will allow the city to become indebted in a manner and amount consistent with the Oklahoma Constitution as the laws of the state. It passed 3,613-2,760.

- Question 57 will allow private process servers to serve writs and subpoenas for the city municipal court. Currently, this is restricted to peace officers. It passed 4,077-2,335.

- Question 58 removes the requirement of segregating in a special fund 20 percent of the city's water revenues. It passed 3,433-2,936.

Lee Thompson, chairman of the charter review committee, called the vote "heartwarming."

"The people approved what we recommended, and I think it's just great," Thompson said. "I'm very appreciative of the people who voted, and I really am grateful to them for coming out. I'm really very grateful to the people that felt they should be approved and who got out and voted. I really appreciate them."

Enid News & Eagle

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AETC Bases News Clips

LUKE AFB, AZ



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Guest commentary

With your support, Duncan Farms will go on

by **Arnott and Kathleen Duncan**

In an effort to resolve a difficult situation, a few weeks ago the city of Goodyear agreed to purchase our farmyard and improvements. Since that time we have been inundated with questions from people wanting to know how we feel about the past year, how we feel about the settlement that was reached, as well as what our plans are for the future. We're grateful for the opportunity to address these issues.

This past year has been very difficult for all involved. For us, the hardest thing to accept has been that no solution would give us back the very special business that we lost. Almost as difficult was the strain that was put on our relationship with the city of Goodyear. You see, we've always been very proud to be in Goodyear — and very grateful for our strong relationship with the city.

When we suspended our activities a year ago, Duncan Family Farms was thriving — 11 years of hard work and investment were finally paying off. Not only was our farm drawing tens of thousands of visitors from around the state each season, but it also had become recognized as a national model for community-based farming.

Although we'd love to take all the credit for such



**Kathleen
Duncan**

a special project, the truth is, we're not responsible for its success. All we had was a dream and a vision. Although this was important, it is not what made Duncan Family Farms successful.

This project thrived because many talented and hard-working individuals committed to it and made it their own. It thrived because many other businesses like Suncor Development Company, Everkrisp Vegetables, Hickman's Egg Ranch, the *West Valley View* and others supported it. It thrived because the community embraced it.

And finally, it thrived because the city of Goodyear trusted our vision, supported our dream and worked through the many unique challenges we presented them with. Our relationship was so strong, in fact, that we designed the city of Goodyear into the logo we designed for Duncan Family Farms.

Sometimes even the best relationships are tested.

A neighbor we both support — Luke Air Force Base — created a situation that gave our partnership with the city of Goodyear an unexpected test.

When Luke re-directed almost all flights over our property, it was discovered that our 44-acre farmyard is, and always has been, in Luke's Accident Potential Zone. Unfortunately, during the 11 years we developed our business, nobody realized this. It was a simple oversight. Unfortunately, it had enormous consequences for us and, potentially, for Luke Air Force Base.

We spent many months working with officials from Goodyear and Luke. Finally, the Goodyear City Council took matters into its own hands. Their deci-

sion to approve a settlement agreement and purchase our property demonstrated a tremendous commitment, not only to our family farm, but also to Luke Air Force Base.

So, with this situation now behind us, what are our plans for the future?

Although we don't know exactly what the future holds for us, there are a couple of things we do know. First, we believe that the spirit that made the dream come true for Duncan Family Farms is still alive in the city of Goodyear.

Second, we have lived and operated a business within Goodyear for almost 20 years. Our sons are 12 and 14 years old and they have never lived anywhere but in Goodyear. Our history in this city and our roots in this community are deep. If possible, we want our future to be here.

Finally, the thought of starting over is, admittedly, a bit overwhelming to us. At times it has been hard to imagine even trying. Fortunately, the support we have felt from the community over the past year has been even more overwhelming. As difficult as this ordeal has been, we are grateful and blessed to have had tremendous friends throughout the community.

People from all over the Valley have taken the time to help and to tell us how much the farm means to them. This outpouring of support has sustained us during the past year. Now it is giving us the strength and desire to create another community-based farming project. Although we don't know exactly what it will be, we do know that it will be something that the community can share in and be proud of.



AETC Bases News Clips

LUKE AFB, AZ



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State fiddles as Luke burns

To the editor:

The State Legislature fiddles while Luke Air Force Base burns.

Forcing new homebuyers to sign waivers acknowledging the aircraft noise and danger, as the Legislature is considering, won't save Luke Air Force Base.

What will save Luke is banning residential development under the loud noise umbrella surrounding the base.

Allowing homes to be built in the loud noise zones of any airport is unforgivable. It endangers billions of dollars of tax money invested in airport facilities and puts to risk families in an unwholesome living environment. Once built, the houses under the noise umbrella will be the object of harm and discomfort and the justifiable source of noise complaints, forever, waiver or no waiver.

Making homebuyers sign a waiver pretends that, somehow, the noise harm goes away.

But loud noise and living environment do not go together. Building houses in loud noise zones is an assault on homebuyers who must tolerate the noise and suffer the damage that it can bring.

The State Legislature needs to get ahead of the wave. Protect-

ing public investment in noisy public facilities means creating adequate buffers around them.

Protecting Luke Air Force Base requires prohibiting residential construction around the base. That means putting together a long range plan which encourages reasonable compatible use of the land surrounding Luke, but restricts out the residential development which is harmful to families and endangers the community's investment.

Mike Cartsonis
Litchfield Park

Cavanaugh for mayor

To the editor:

Having lived in Goodyear since 1945, and witnessing its fantastic growth in the recent years, I firmly believe Jim Cavanaugh has the necessary qualities required to lead our city into the future.

As a retired Air Force colonel with firsthand experience in how base closure impacts surrounding communities, he could contribute valuable insight to strategies put forth to prevent Luke AFB closure should a closure be debated by higher authority deciding base closing. Base closure impacts much more than financial matters, it disrupts school children, uproots family ties to the community, interrupts civilian and military careers and obstructs long established bonds of friendship.

I served on the Goodyear Planning & Zoning Commission for nearly 43 years and have firsthand knowledge of Jim's leadership qualities and techniques since he served three years on the commission prior to being elected to the City Council. Jim came to each meeting well prepared and never hesitated in asking tough hard questions. And when appropriate, he was effective in negotiating an appropriate compromise.

Jim is committed to insisting upon clean and efficient government by all city employees and he will represent all citizens of the city and give their welfare his highest priority. It is with great pleasure that I endorse Jim Cavanaugh for mayor.

F. E. "Pete" Deery
Goodyear

Tough choice for Goodyear

Goodyear voters face a very tough choice on Tuesday. Two highly qualified candidates are running for mayor, and both of them are current members of the City Council. The candidate who loses not only will not become mayor, he will also have to step down from his council position.

One of Seth Kanter's greatest strengths is he has developed a more extensive network of Valley leaders in eight years on the council than Jim Cavanaugh has in his four years on council and four years on the Planning and Zoning Commission, and Kanter has also worked with the Maricopa Association of Governments on transportation issues. However, questions have been raised about his campaign support, much of which has come from developers. Is he getting their support because they believe he will be the most fair to them when dealing with development issues, or because they perceive that he is the one they can influence the most? We don't know.

The majority of Cavanaugh's support comes from Goodyear residents, but popularity alone doesn't make a person the most qualified to be mayor. However, he does have strengths of his own. His Air Force experience as commander of a base that was closed puts him in a unique position to understand the importance of Luke Air Force Base and the threat to its preservation. It also gives him an advantage in dealings with the military establishment. Furthermore, Cavanaugh expressed a willingness to go outside the city to promote Goodyear as a good place to establish a business.

The manner in which any voter weighs the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates will determine who to vote for. Neither candidate has shown a clear advantage.

The *West Valley View* editorial board was unable to reach a consensus on which candidate is the more qualified, therefore we have no endorsement in this race. No matter who wins, Goodyear will get a good mayor and lose a good councilman.

West Valley View
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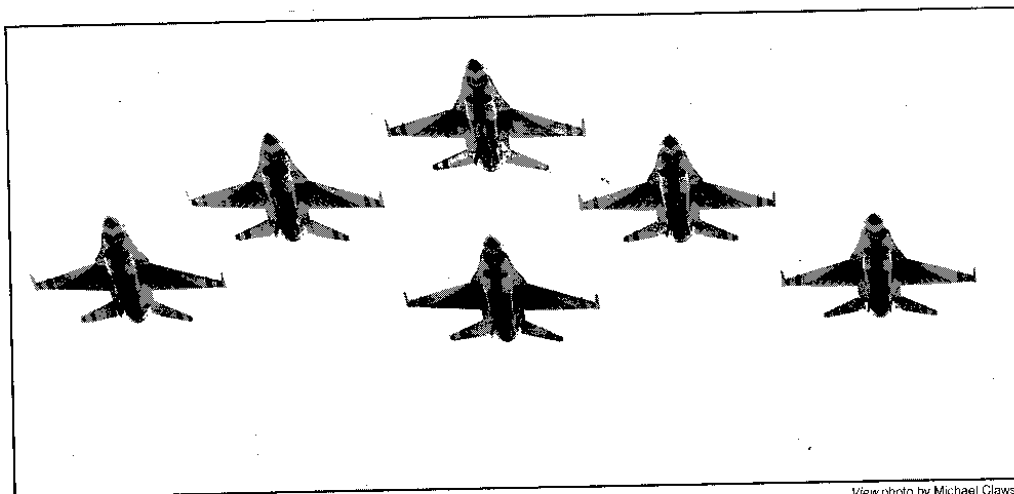
AETC Bases News Clips

LUKE AFB, AZ



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Luke Days Air Show takes to WV skies



View photo by Michael Clawson

Birds of a feather ...

The Thunderbirds, a touring wing of F-16 fighter jets, scream over Luke Air Force Base in a V formation as a warm-up to an air show from 2001. The Thunderbirds will be returning to Luke Saturday and Sunday for Luke Days 2003, an annual festival of flight at the Air Force base.

by Mike Burkett
staff writer

The Thunderbirds, the U.S. Air Force's aerial demonstration team, will celebrate its 50th anniversary by headlining the Luke Days Air Show 2003, set to fill West Valley skies March 15 and 16.

An eight-pilot Air Combat Command unit created at Luke Air Force Base, the Thunderbirds travel the globe, performing precision aerial maneuvers and demonstrating, spectacularly, the capabilities of Air Force high-performance aircraft and those pilots who fly, maintain and support them.

"I think the Thunderbirds represent the whole Air Force," said Lt. Col. Keith Yaktus, one of Luke Days' organizers, when asked to explain the squadron's enduring popularity. "Just the precision of their team is always exciting.

"Also, they are a great recruiter. The goal of many pilots is to become a Thunderbird some day."

Joining the Thunderbirds in the March 15-16 extravaganza — subtitled "A Century of Flight: Fifty Years of Thunder" — will be several military demonstration teams and civilian aerial shows, including:

- A-10 Demonstration Team, which will show off the capabilities of the A/OA-10 Thunderbolt II, the first Air Force aircraft specially designed for close air support of

(See Luke Days on page B11)

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AETC Bases News Clips

LUKE AFB, AZ



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View photo by Michael Clawson

Birds in a row

Maneuvering with the Thunderbirds isn't like flying any old aircraft for these six Air Force pilots. It's more like a jet-propelled dance as each element is carefully rehearsed and refined. From taking off and performing aerial stunts to landing and lining up on the runway, the Thunderbirds' routines are precise acts of flight. The Thunderbirds return to Luke Air Force Base Saturday and Sunday for Luke Days 2003.

Luke Days

(From page B10)

ground forces.

- The F-15 Demonstration Team, which will offer a roaring illustration of the F-15 Eagle's air superiority, achieved through unprecedented maneuverability and acceleration, range, weapons and avionics. It all adds up to a machine that can penetrate enemy defense and outperform and outfight any current enemy aircraft.

- Ed Hamill, who will take a spin in The Dream Machine, a factory-built, unmodified biplane that travels at speeds more than 210 mph and can handle up to six positive and five negative Gs.

"It makes you really nervous watching this guy," Yaktus said. "He does some amazing things."

- Tora Tora Tora, a pyrotechnics-laden re-creation of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which is accomplished by hundreds of volunteers, most from the Commemorative Air Force (CAF).

- Chuck Lischer and the F-260 Warrior, N941TA, who will combine Lischer's legendary flying style and original maneuvers with the historic warbird's famous high-performance flight characteristics.

- Sean Tucker, flying the Oracle Challenger, will return to once again thrill the crowd with truly death-defying feats — and hammer himself with more G-forces than jet fighter pilots experience.

- The Viper vs. Viper high performance vehicle race, a Luke Days favorite, which

pits the Dodge Viper's liquid cooled V-10 engine against the F-16's Pratt and Whitney jet engine with 27,000 pounds of thrust.

- The "Smoke-

N-Thunder" jet dragster, owned and operated by Scott and Linda Hammack, of Corona, Calif., which will streak down Luke's runway at speeds in excess of 350 mph.

- The Red Baron Pizza Squadron, a gaggle of WWI-era biplanes, will make its Luke Days debut.

Not all of the free-to-the-public activities offered by this display of air power will be in the wild blue yonder, however. Dozens of aircraft and other attractions will be on the ground in static displays, including Luke's own F-16, the F-15 Eagle, the A-10 Thunderbolt, the F/A-18

Hornet, the F-117 Nighthawk, the F-4 Phantom II, the B-1 Lancer, the C-17 Globemaster III, the KC-135 Stratotanker, the C-130 Hercules, and the C-47 "Gooney Bird."

Admission to the Luke Days 2003 Air Show is free, but there will be a

\$5-per-car parking fee. Security will be emphasized: no pets, weapons, coolers, glass bottles, backpacks or containers will be allowed, and all hand-carried items are subject to search.

"Our security

measures will be similar to last year's, when we were in the same force-protection condition that we're in now," Yaktus said of the 2002 Luke Days event, which drew about 150,000 air-show fans to the base.

"We have that experience, we've learned things, and we've improved — which is good, because we're expecting even more visitors this year."

Mike Burkett can be reached by email at mburkett@westvalleyview.com.

WHAT:	Luke Days Air Show 2003
WHEN:	9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday
ADMISSION:	Free
PARKING:	\$5
INFO:	623-856-7064

West Valley View

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AETC Bases News Clips

Altus AFB, OK



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Former POW visits Altus

Retired general attributes survival to his faith in God

BY MITCH MEADOR

STAFF WRITER
MMEADOR@LAWTON-CONSTITUTION.COM

ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE — "Faith in God and love of country are what have gotten me this far," a retired Air Force brigadier general who spent 7½ years as a North Vietnamese prisoner of war said Tuesday.

Brig. Gen. Robinson Risner is the first living recipient of the Air Force Cross, which he received twice. He flew more than 100 combat missions during the Korean war to become the

nation's 20th Jet Ace. He retired from the Air Force in 1976 after 33 years of service.

"Some people queried why I was still alive, and I have been introduced more than once as a man with the tiredest possible guardian angel," Risner said at a National Prayer Luncheon on Altus Air Force Base.

In Korea, he once engaged a MiG fighter plane who tried to lose him by swinging down to the mountains. Risner thought it would be the easiest kill he ever made, but the pilot pulled out of it.

"I cut him off so much when I got behind him I could see the rivets in his wing and his tail. You might say it got a little bit close," he said.

"When I got my head above the smoke, that guy picked that very moment to eject. First came his canopy, then he and the seat. I never did know

which of the three I ran into, but it knocked part of my windshield out."

Powdered glass flew into his eyes, blinding him. His wingman, a new lieutenant, talked him all the way back to the airfield, and it took two tries before they got the plane on the ground.

The flight surgeon pooh-poohed that story, saying "no normal human being could have gotten back here with their eyes full of powdered glass."

"He didn't know my God," Risner said.

On another occasion, he lost his oxygen system when his regulator blew up quite a way from home.

"There was a jet stream going from China back to our base. We could always depend on it. All we had to do was get up high enough to catch it and we could practically coast home," he said.

SEE POW, 3A

The Altus Times

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AETC Bases News Clips

Altus AFB, OK



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POW: Altus visitor recalls Vietnam experience

CONTINUED FROM 1A

It was at 30,000 feet, though, and losing his oxygen kept restricted him to 23,000.

"When I got back I was a bit woozy. I had landed the wrong direction. I flushed everybody else like a covey of quail, and I complained bitterly ... about all these guys going the wrong way," he said.

Again, the flight surgeon dismissed his tale: "Nobody can stay at 23,000 feet for over half an hour without blacking out. You should've crashed. Unless you were born in Tibet."

Blessed

Risner said the Lord has been with him all his life. He recalled another occasion during a high-altitude test when everything that could go wrong did. The flight surgeon rushed onto his plane as it was coasting to a stop and told him, "Robbie, you know you'll never fly again. Your heart's damaged."

"Even I could feel my torn heart valve. It sounded like a seagull squawking," Risner said. But eventually he did go back up, without asking the surgeon's permission.

"The flight surgeon was just

"Had I not had faith in God I wouldn't have come back."

RETIRED BRIG. GEN. ROBINSON RISNER

FORMER VIETNAM PRISONER OF WAR

'What are you doing here?'

After the Hanoi Hilton, he was moved to a place 5 miles south called "The Zoo" because the POWs were treated like animals. They were left in their cells for days, and then were allowed out only to empty their waste buckets.

He was startled to hear a voice whisper to him through a vent in the floor: "What are you doing here?"

"Like I'd volunteered!" Risner quipped. It turned out to be someone he knew, who had flown with him. "I told him 'I'm doing the same thing you are.'"

The man said he had contact by various means with everyone in camp, and asked if Risner had anything he wanted to tell the other POWs.

"I told him to ask everyone to pray for beds (they had only broken concrete floors), light and outdoor exercise," he said.

"Within two weeks we got everything we prayed for. I know that everyone who got shot down

who didn't believe in God was gradually turning because of what was happening."

Pledging allegiance

Once, 47 Americans were reunited in the same cellblock, and the youngest one asked if they could have church services on Sunday. They began their services with the Pledge of Allegiance, which infuriated the North Vietnamese. They came in and said, "Shut mouths, sit down," but the Americans kept the service going to its conclusion. When threatened with a return to the conditions of 1967, they decided to take a vote on whether to continue the services.

"The young chaplain raised his hand and said, 'I vote we go to the last man.' Forty-seven hands went up," Risner recalled.

Identified as a ringleader, he was one of the first three to be led out. The worst of their torturers was in front of them, gleefully rubbing his hands and threatening them with more torture and death. At that moment, Risner said, "someone inside began to sing, 'Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light ...' I felt 9 feet tall, like I could go bear-hunting with a switch."

furious. ... The only thing was, when we got to his office, he couldn't find the torn valve with his stethoscope," Risner said.

The hardest thing to bear about his captivity in Vietnam — more difficult than torture — was time and loneliness. Risner spent four years in solitary confinement.

"Had I not had faith in God I wouldn't have come back," he said.

Surviving torture

The first time he was tortured, his captors tied his arms together behind his shoulder blades, forcing his shoulders out of joint and separating his ribs in front. The next day he had circular blood blisters on his arms where he had been tied.

"We found this out, though. The human body and the human mind are tremendously resilient. You can take more than you ever thought you could. You'd be surprised how much you can take. Probably every one of you could," he said.



STAFF

Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Robinson Risner autographs copies of his book, "The Passing of the Night," after speaking at Altus Air Force Base on Tuesday. He spent 7½ years in captivity after being shot down over North Vietnam.

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AETC Bases News Clips

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Flying steady

By: Robert Barron, Staff Writer

March 05, 2003

Enid delegation discusses base closure in Washington, D.C.

Enid's efforts to protect and enhance Vance Air Force Base are on the right track, "at least for now."

Secretary of the Air Force James Roche told a group of Enid delegates Tuesday encroachment protection of Vance Air Force Base, available airspace and quality of life as it pertains to education of military families are of highest priorities, said Mike Cooper, president of Vance Task Force and member of Vance Development Authority.

Education issues include children of military members seeking higher education, he said.

About 32 Enid people spoke to Roche about the 2005 base closure round, military personnel, privatization and aircraft on the way to Vance.

The 2005 base closure round will focus on the process to shape the military infrastructure to maximize operational capability of the armed forces, he said.

Roche told the group he is pleased with the sales tax and bond issues passed by Enid voters in February to strengthen education and said the military is taking a sensible approach he says will boil down to "where we can fly, where families can have a decent life and schools are good," Cooper said.

The importance of privatization to free up military construction dollars for the war fighters will be important, said Fred Kuhne, deputy assistant secretary of Military Installations.

"Community leaders have become the mothers and fathers to our military men and women, not only in the time of war but every day," Kuhne said.

U.S. Rep. Frank Lucas called the discussions with Pentagon officials "worthwhile."

"The gentleman responsible for military construction money said he is pleased that Vance is managed in an efficient manner," said Lucas, R-Okla.

"The gentleman in human resources indicated he thinks there will be a steady need for good pilots in the future," Lucas said.

Things are going very well, Cooper said.

"We've been meeting with Secretary Roche, and he reiterated some things we already knew and highlighted those," Cooper said.

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Enid delegation discusses base closure in Washington, D.C., Con't.

Passage of the improvement plan for schools was important to Air Force officials, he said.

"It was a great meeting to be able to understand how the new criteria will be developed," Cooper said. "We also feel comfortable we are, at least for the moment, on the right track on protection and enhancement efforts."

Cooper complimented U.S. Sens. Don Nickles and Jim Inhofe, both R-Okla., as well as Lucas for their assistance.

"We give them our ideas, and they help carry that through," he said. "Since the meeting, we have some level of confidence that what we are doing is the right thing."

Interaction with Pentagon officials proved "very productive," Lucas said.

"The Pentagon is a very busy place these days. By the expression on their faces and their mannerisms, it is a very busy place," Lucas said.

He said he was pleased at the number of people in the Air Force who had time to discuss the future of Enid.

"The mayor and councilmen who worked so hard as always did a good job. It's nice having a good, proactive, bright group of constituents who work so hard," Lucas said.

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